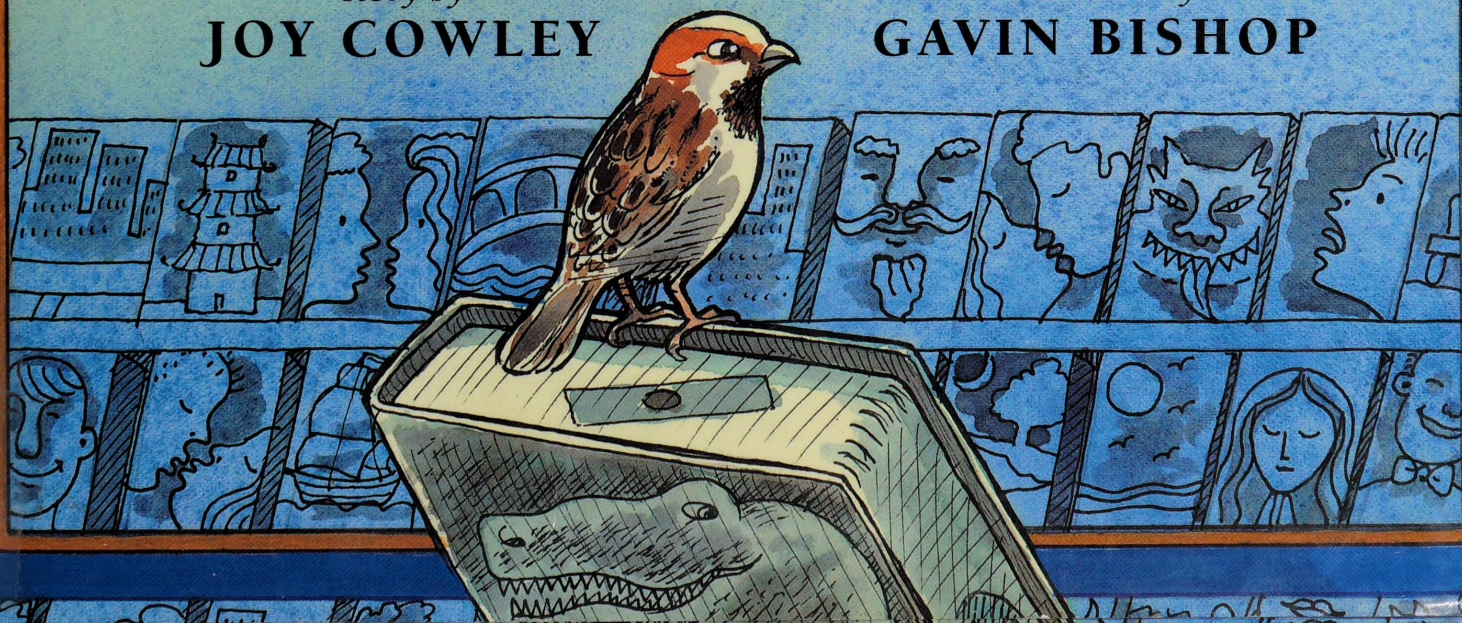


# *The Video Shop Sparrow*

story by  
**JOY COWLEY**

illustrated by  
**GAVIN BISHOP**





\$15.95 U.S.  
\$24.99 Canada

# The Video Shop Sparrow

Story by Joy Cowley

Illustrated by Gavin Bishop

GEORGE AND HARRY skateboard to the video shop, only to find it closed. Peering through the window, they notice something unusual—a sparrow trapped inside. The owner of the shop is out of town for two weeks and can't be reached. If the boys don't act soon, the poor bird will die.

They try to get help from some of the adults in town, but none seem interested in rescuing the bird. As one adult says, "It's only a sparrow. Plenty more where that came from."

George and Harry won't give up. They take their plea directly to the mayor. How the boys eventually rescue the little bird, forms the story of Joy Cowley's uplifting picture book.

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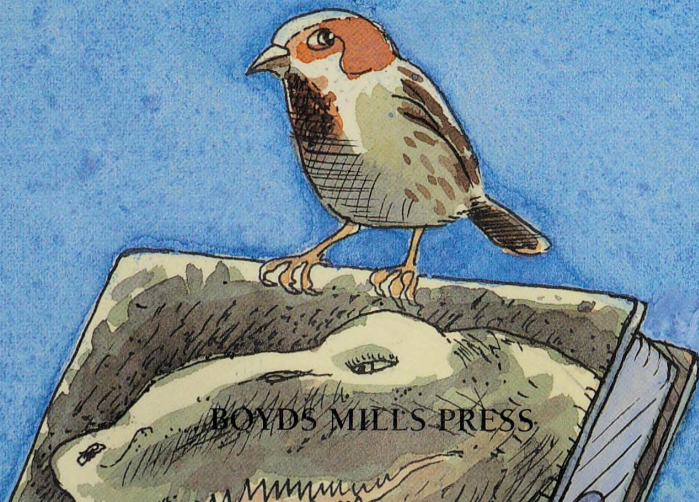





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Illustrations © 1999 by Gavin Bishop

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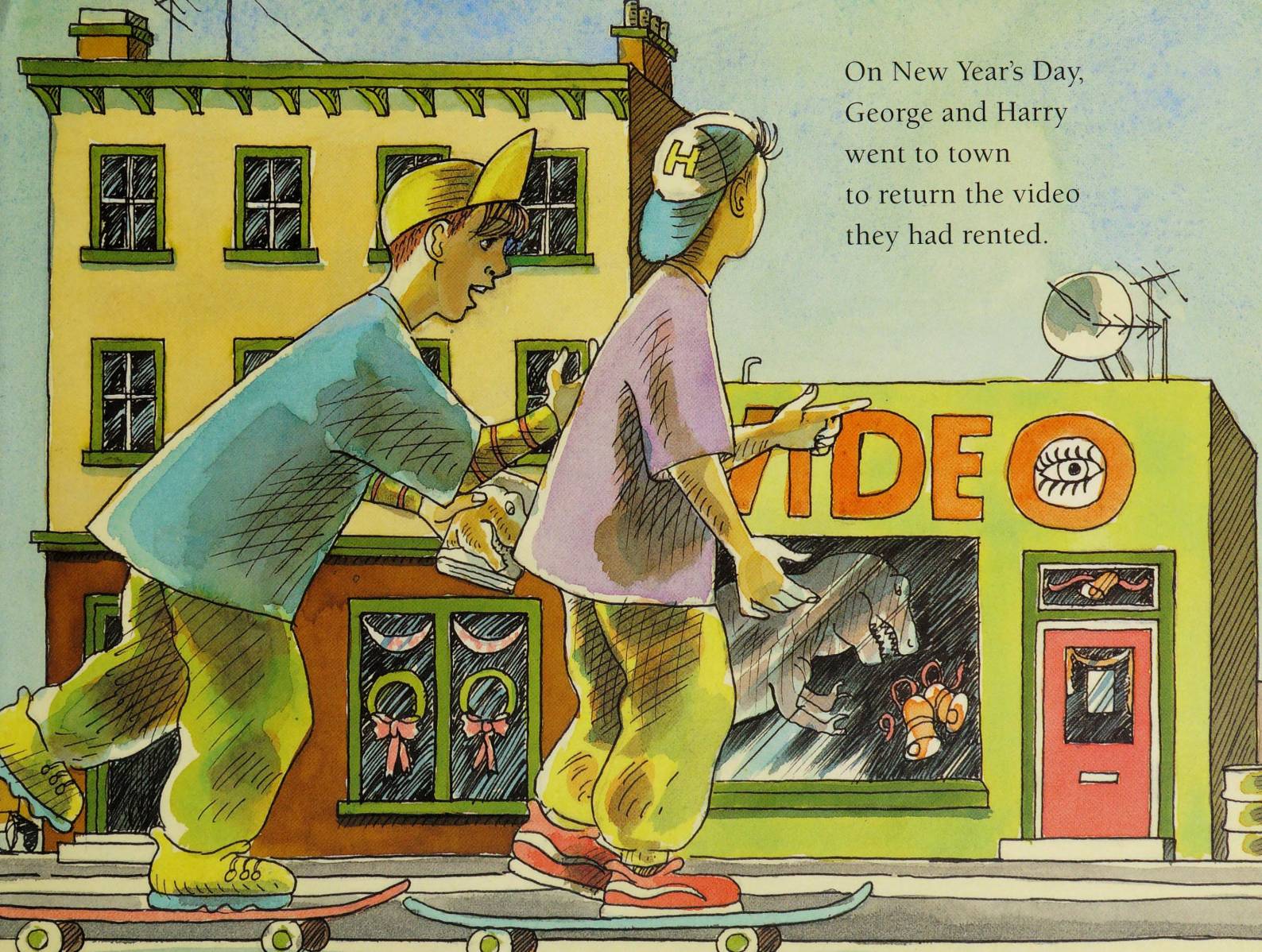
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On New Year's Day,  
George and Harry  
went to town  
to return the video  
they had rented.

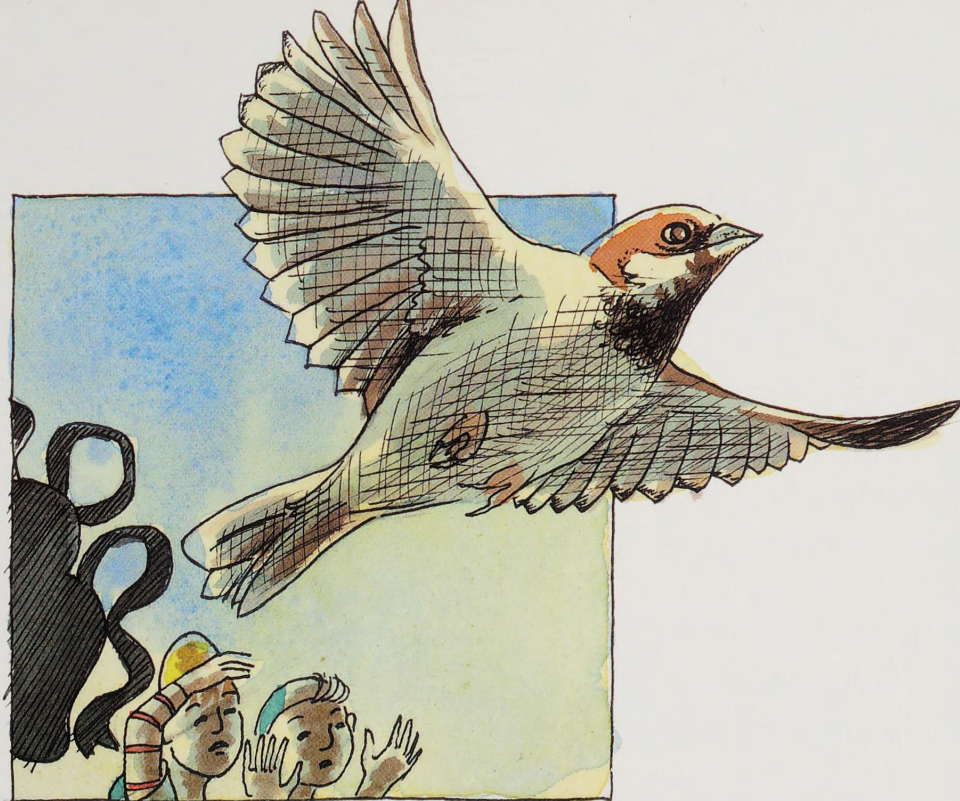






The video shop was closed.  
On the door was a notice,  
WILL REOPEN JANUARY 13  
and under the notice was a flap  
like the mouth of a letterbox.  
George pushed the video  
under the flap and it fell clunk  
into the bag on the other side.





Harry, who had his nose pressed hard  
against the glass window, said,  
“Hey George! Look! A sparrow!  
It’s flying around the shop.”



The restaurant across the street  
was open.

"Can I get something for you?"  
asked the woman  
who was wiping the tables.

"There's a sparrow in the video shop,"  
said George. "It's locked in."  
"The shop won't open again  
for nearly two weeks," said Harry.

George said, "Maybe the video man  
could come and open the door.  
Do you know where he lives?"

The woman shook her head.

"He's gone on vacation.

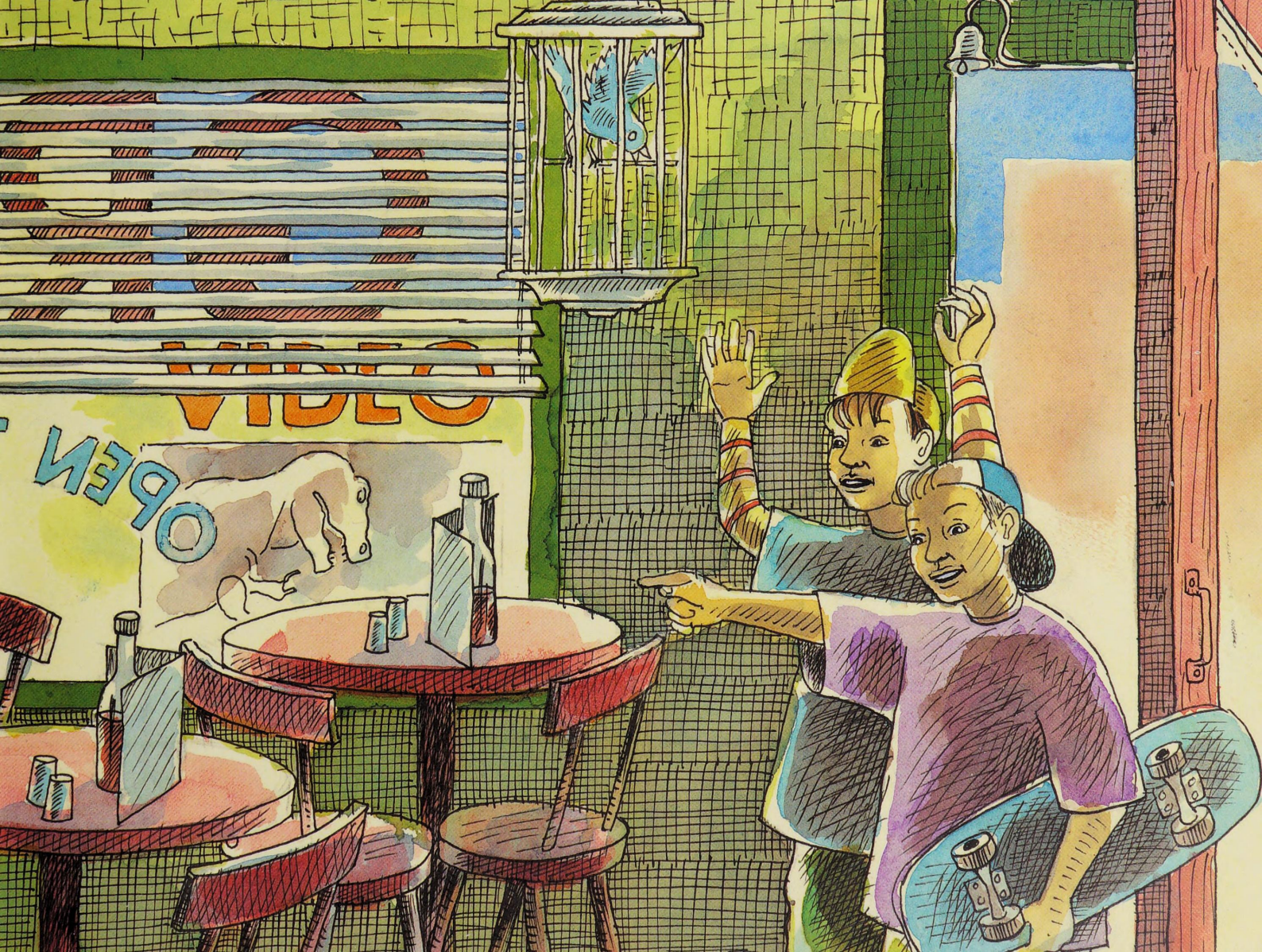
But don't worry kids.

It's only a sparrow.

Plenty more where that came from."





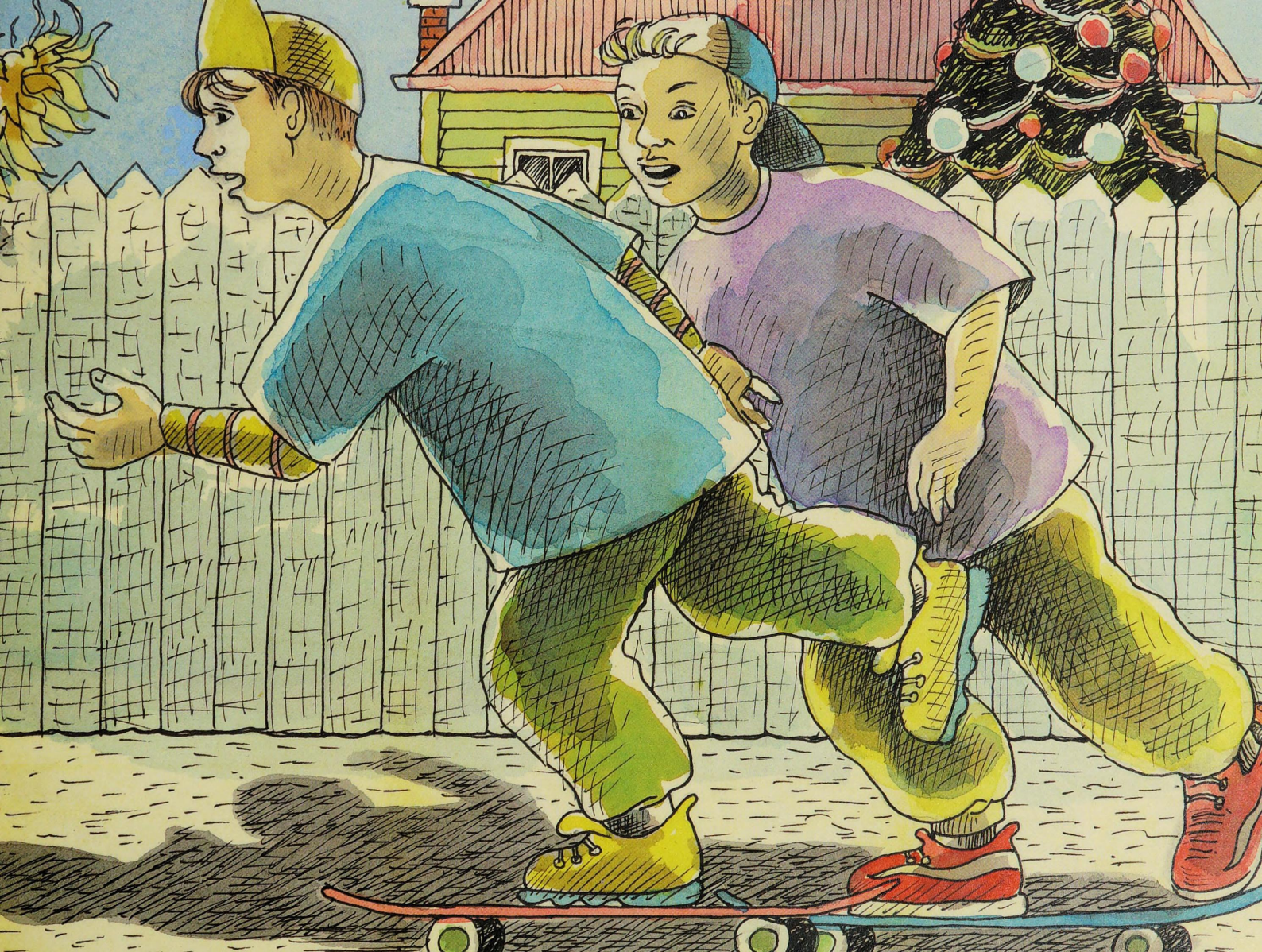






George and Harry rushed home to tell their mother and father about the video shop sparrow.













Their father knew the video man.  
He tried to call him but all he got  
was an answering machine.

“He’s gone all right,”  
their father said.

“We’ll have to rescue it,”  
said George.

His father shook his head.

“Forget it,” he said.

“Sparrows aren’t exactly  
an endangered species.”





That afternoon, the boys went back to the video shop.  
The sparrow was now in the window.  
It was flying up and down the glass, trying to get out.



When the sparrow saw George and Harry  
it stopped flying.

Harry said,

“It’s got a special look in its eye.

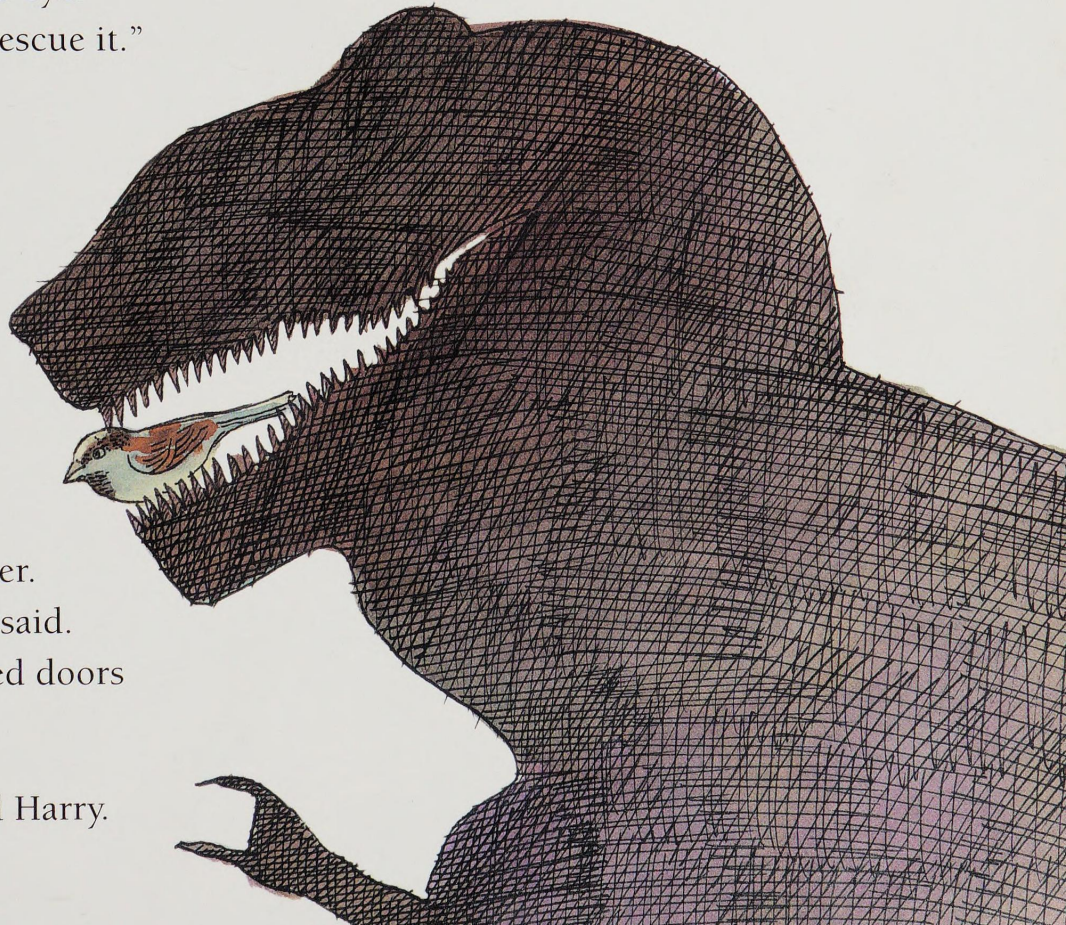
It knows we are trying to rescue it.”

George turned to his brother.

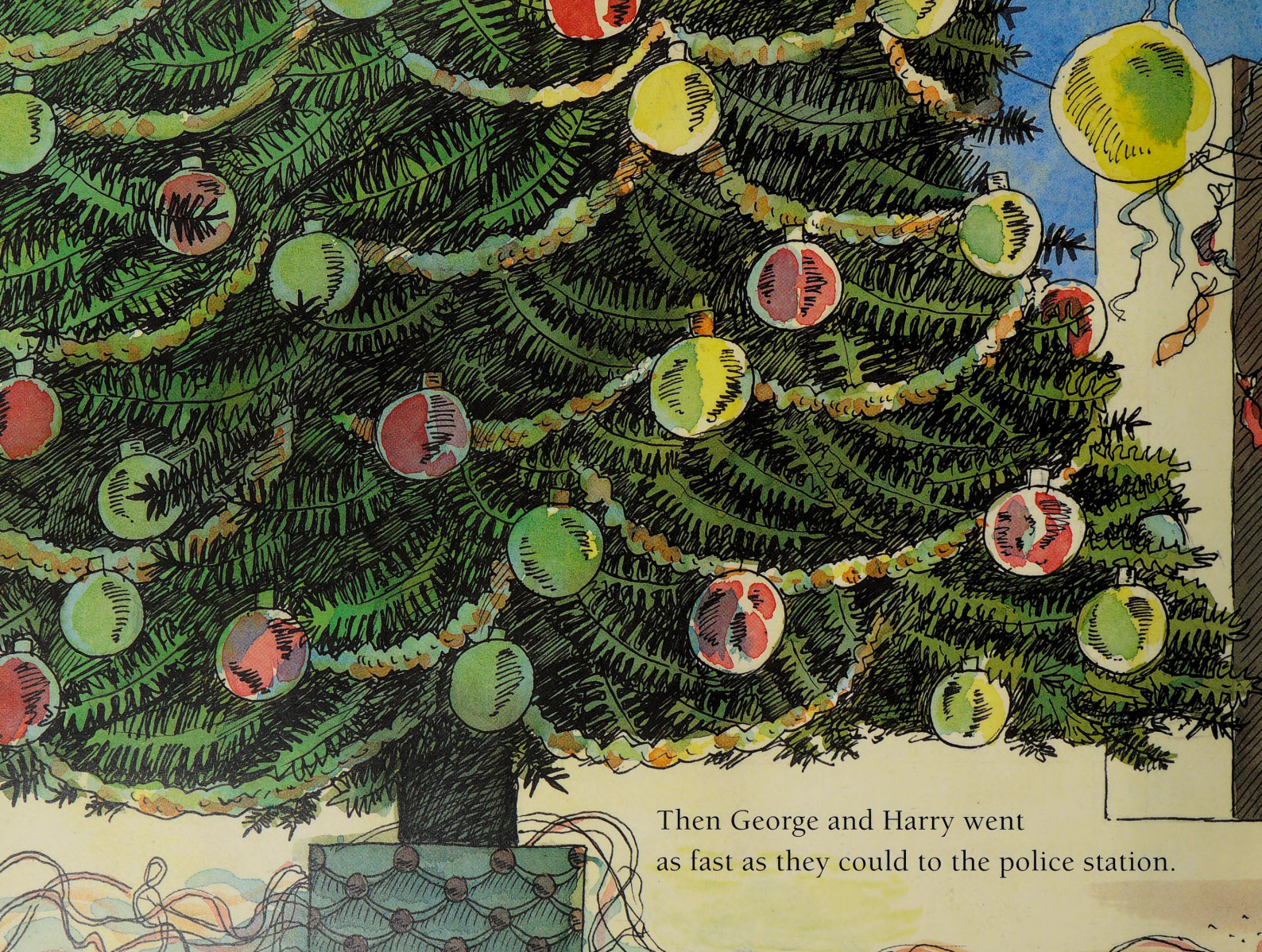
“Who rescues people?” he said.

“Who can bust down locked doors  
to get inside places?”

“I know! I know!” shouted Harry.







Then George and Harry went  
as fast as they could to the police station.



# HAPPY NEW YEAR





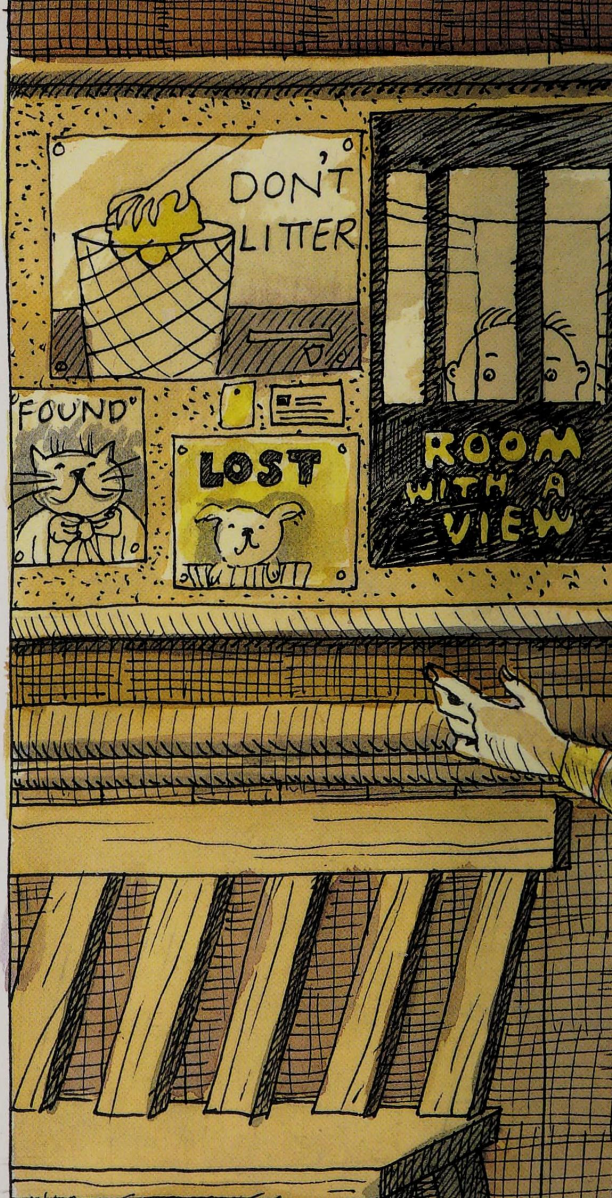
“The video shop!” cried George.  
“It’s an emergency! It’s locked inside.  
Going to d-d-d-die.”

The policeman stood up.  
“Are you trying to tell me  
someone’s in trouble in the video shop?”

The boys nodded and Harry said,  
“It’s flying in the window and the shop  
doesn’t open until January 13th.”

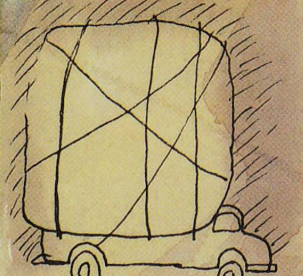
“Flying?” the man stopped.  
“Are we talking about a bird?”  
“A sparrow,” George said.  
“Please! You can bust down the door!”

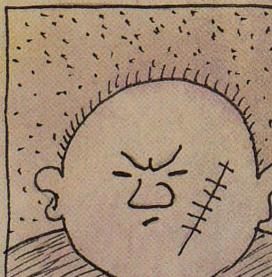
The policeman sat down again.  
He said, “Last night was New Year’s Eve.  
On New Year’s Eve I don’t get much sleep.  
Now buzz off, both of you, before you find out  
what I can be like when I’m tired.”  
“But what about the sparrow?” asked George.  
“It can tweet in bird heaven,” the policeman said.



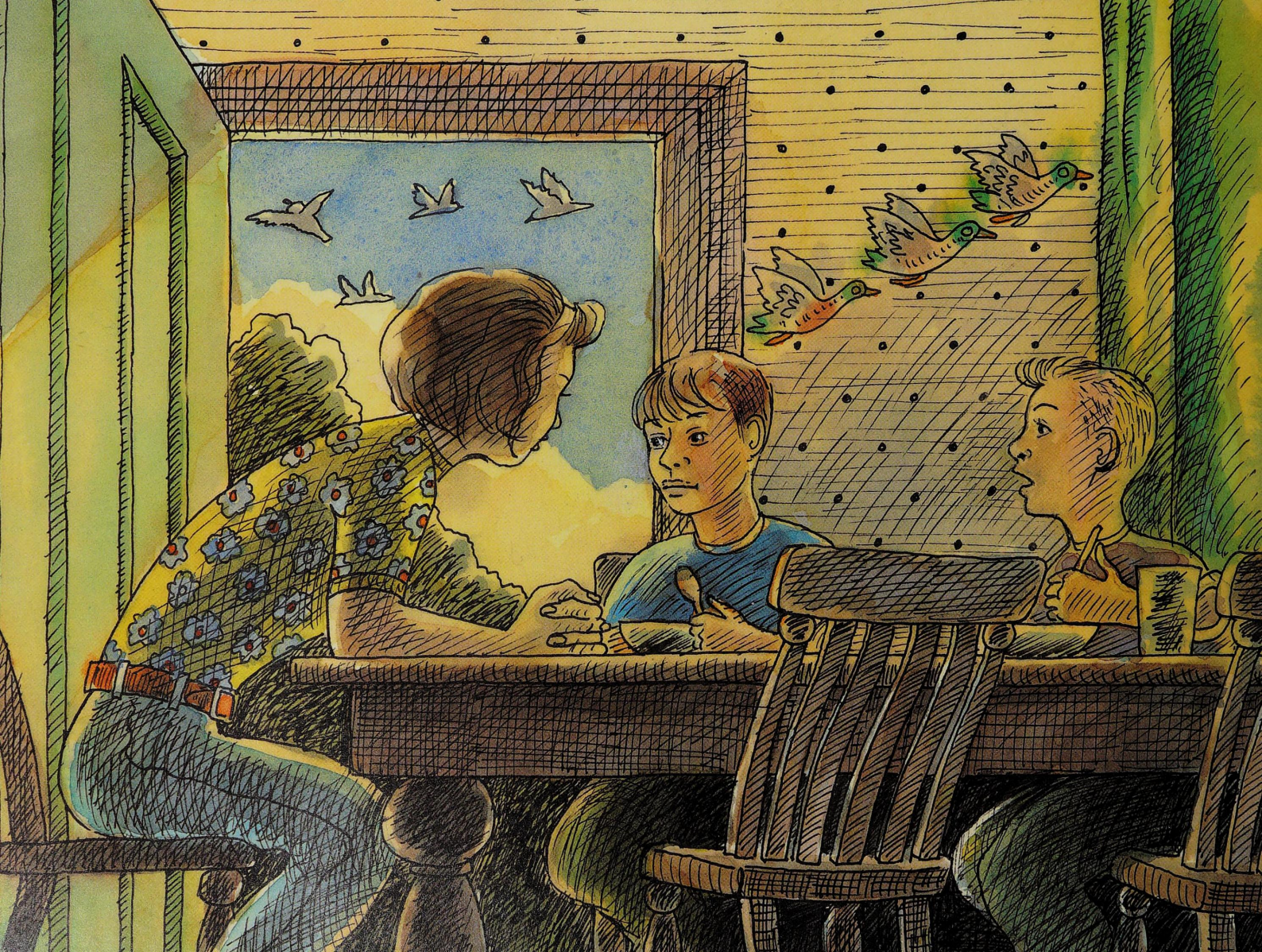




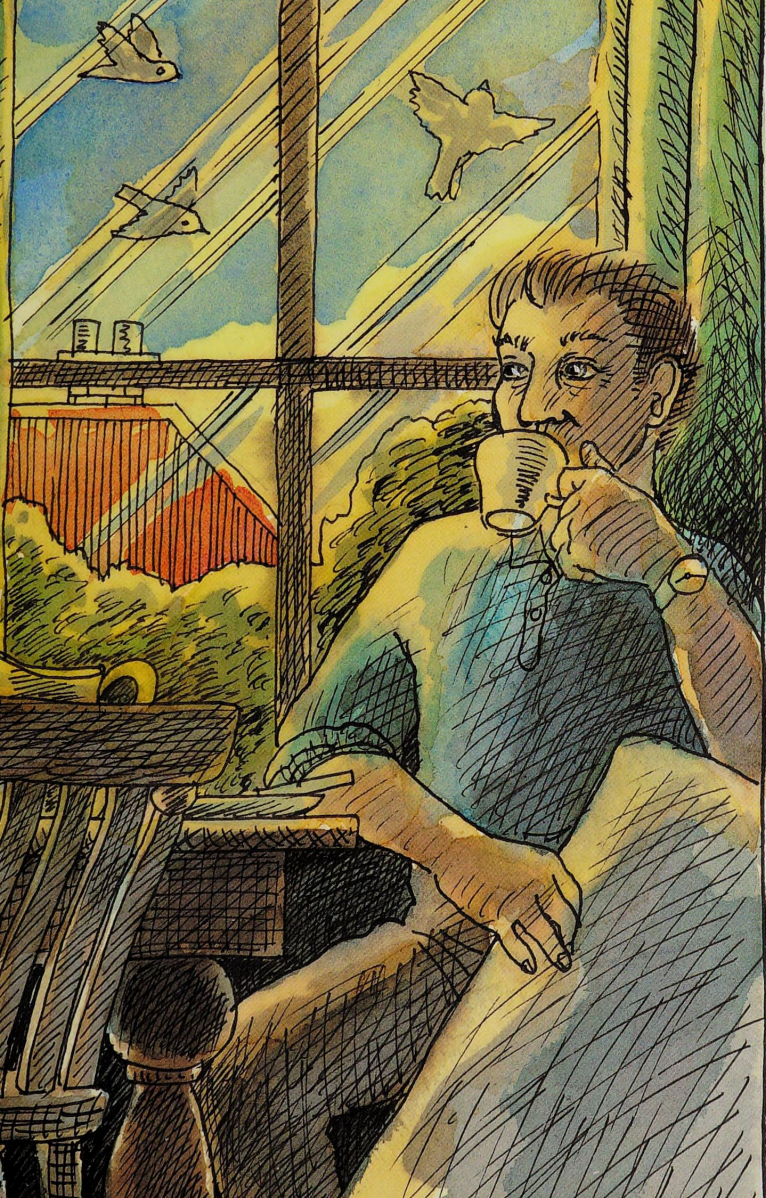
  
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The next day,  
their mother talked to them about death.  
“Everyone dies,” she said. “That’s life.  
Great-grandpa died. The cat died.  
Don’t worry about it. There are  
millions of sparrows in the world.”

“It’s not dead yet,” said Harry,  
mashing his cornflakes into the milk.  
“It’s waiting for us to rescue it.”

“Why don’t you take some bread out  
to feed the sparrows in the garden?”  
said their father.

“What good will that do?” asked George.

His father smiled.

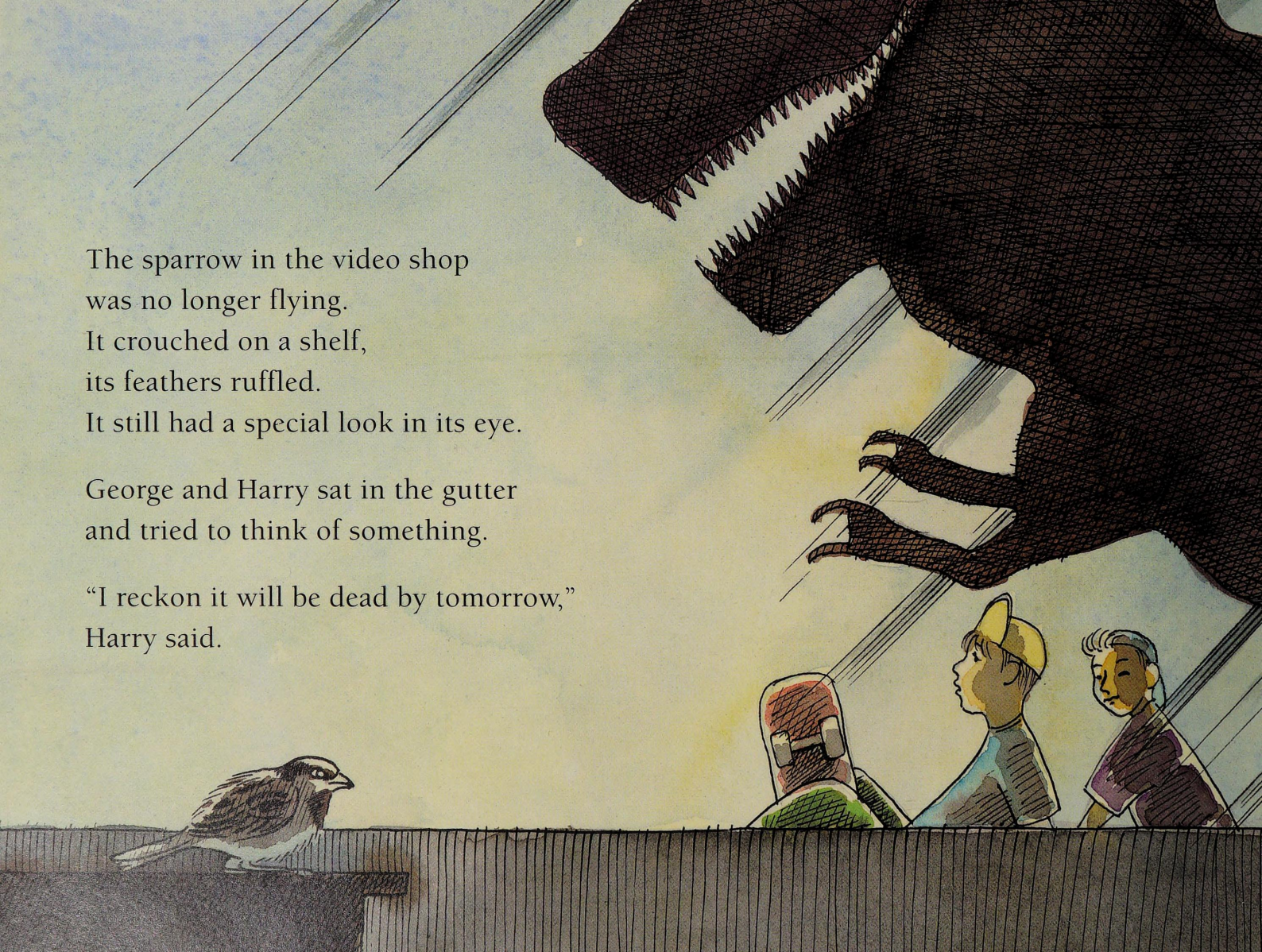
“It will make you realize  
that sparrows are like ants.  
One more or less  
doesn’t matter all that much.”



The sparrow in the video shop  
was no longer flying.  
It crouched on a shelf,  
its feathers ruffled.  
It still had a special look in its eye.

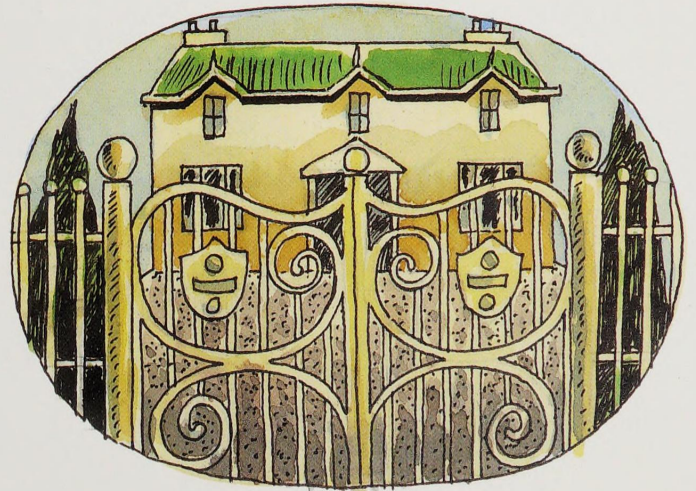
George and Harry sat in the gutter  
and tried to think of something.

"I reckon it will be dead by tomorrow,"  
Harry said.





George didn't want to think about that.  
"Dad always says if you want a job done,  
you have to go to the top," he said.  
"Who do you reckon  
is the top in this town?  
Who is the big boss?  
Mrs. McKenzie the mayor!"



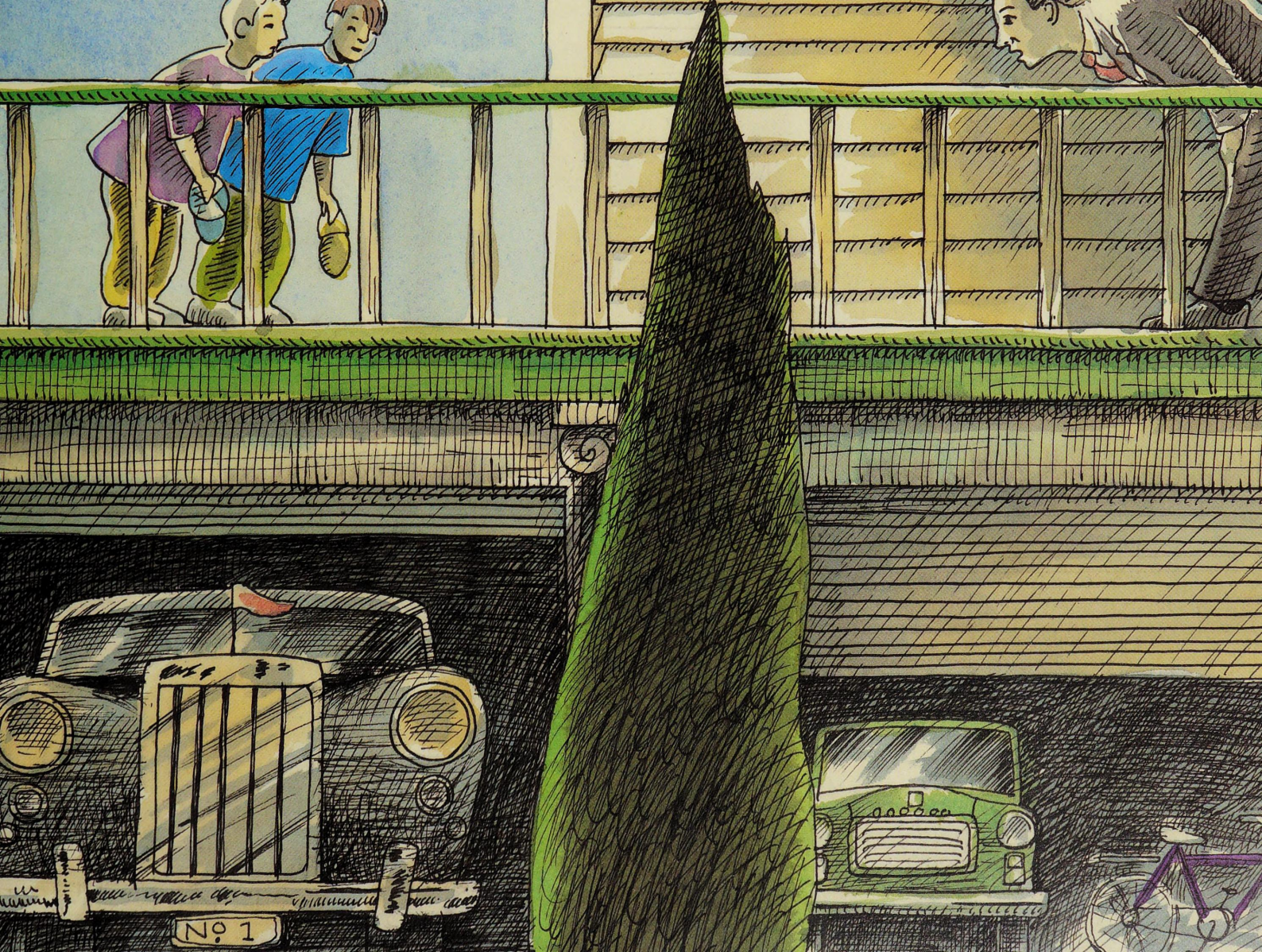


A man answered the door  
of Mrs. McKenzie's house.  
"I'm sorry," he said to the boys.  
"You can't see the mayor.  
She's having a press conference  
with people from four newspapers."

"We'll wait till she's finished,"  
said George, and they sat  
on the steps.





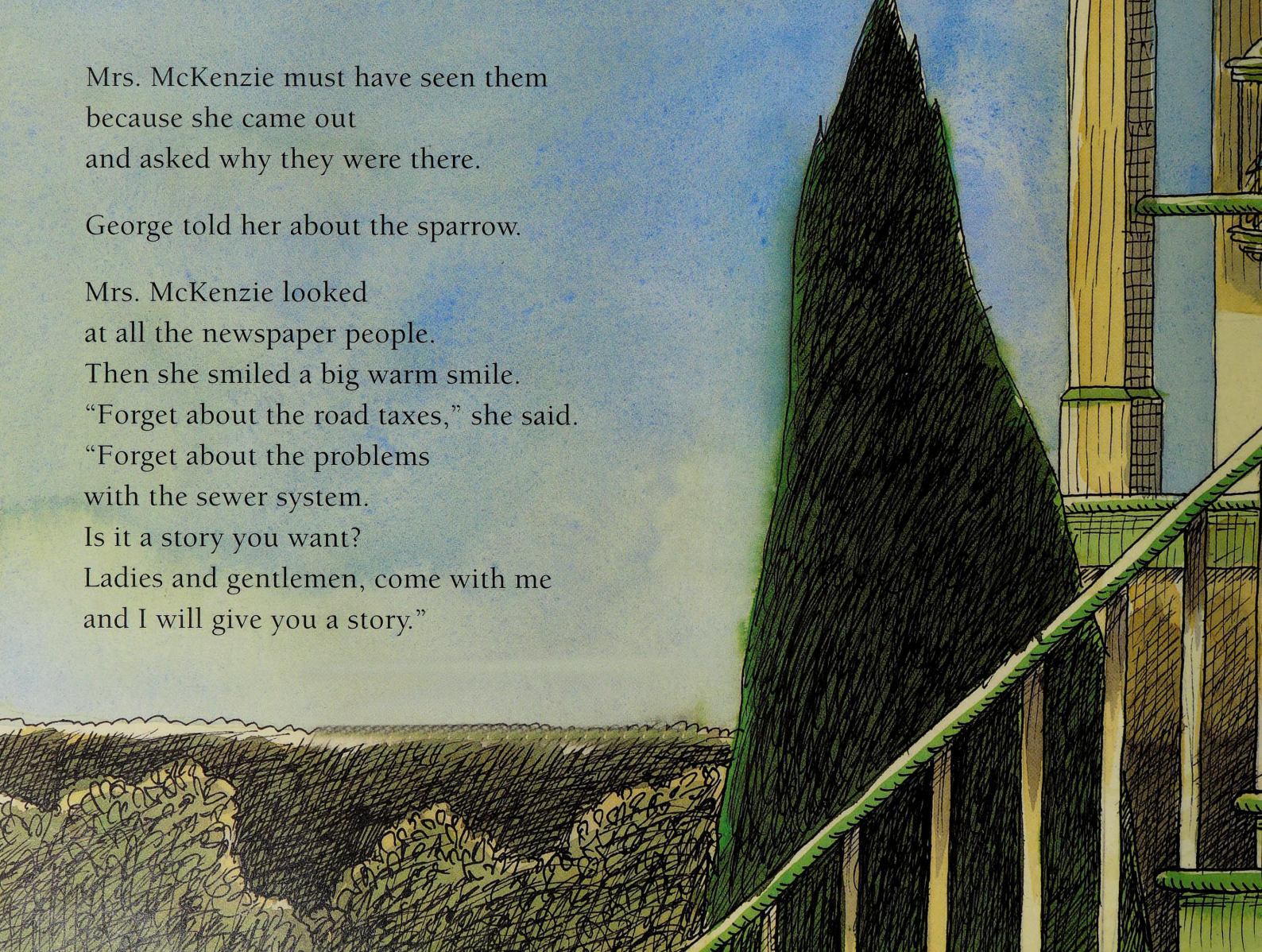




Mrs. McKenzie must have seen them  
because she came out  
and asked why they were there.

George told her about the sparrow.

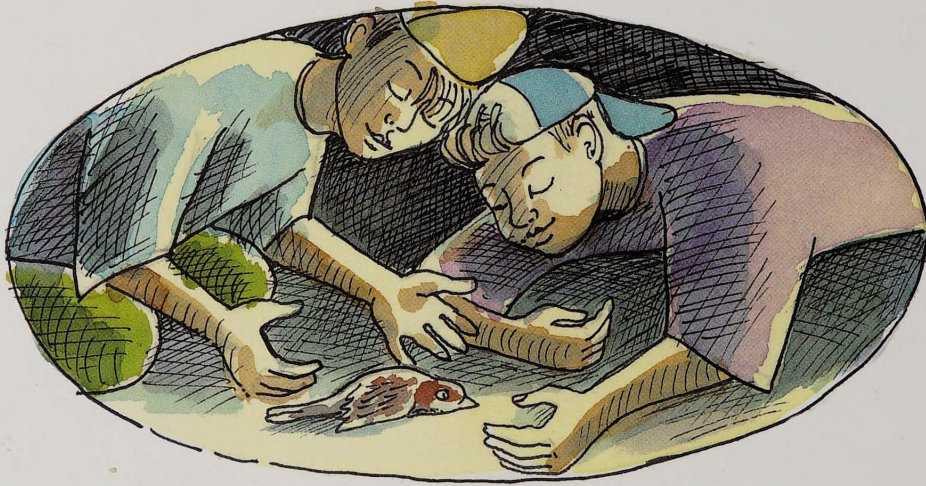
Mrs. McKenzie looked  
at all the newspaper people.  
Then she smiled a big warm smile.  
“Forget about the road taxes,” she said.  
“Forget about the problems  
with the sewer system.  
Is it a story you want?  
Ladies and gentlemen, come with me  
and I will give you a story.”











Mrs. McKenzie knew just about everyone,  
including a security guard who had several bunches of keys.

They all went to the back of the video shop  
and the guard opened the door.

Harry and George ran in.  
They went straight to the front window.

The sparrow was lying on the floor and it was still alive.



George picked it up in both hands.  
He could feel its heart beating  
against his fingers.

He and Harry would have let it go  
right there and then.  
But Mrs. McKenzie wanted a photo first.  
George had to shelter the sparrow  
while the cameras went flash, flash, flash,  
and Mrs. McKenzie told  
the newspaper people  
that no job was too small  
for a caring mayor.





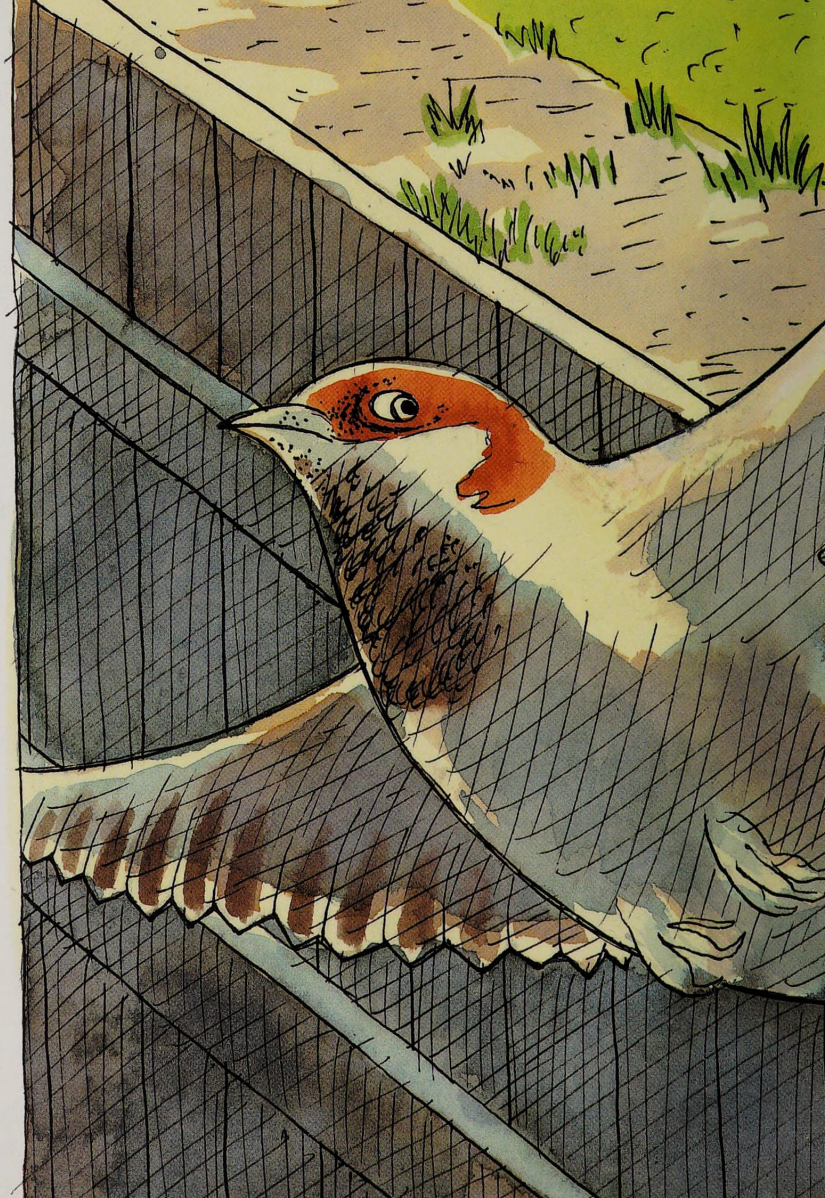
Then George was able to open his hands.

For a while the bird lay on his palm,  
its heart ticking like a tiny watch.

George blew gently on it.

The sparrow opened its eyes,  
shook its feathers a little  
and gave him that special trusting look.  
Then it spread its wings and fluttered  
and it leapt right into the air.

George thought it might fall,  
but it flew over the fence  
and in a moment, was gone.











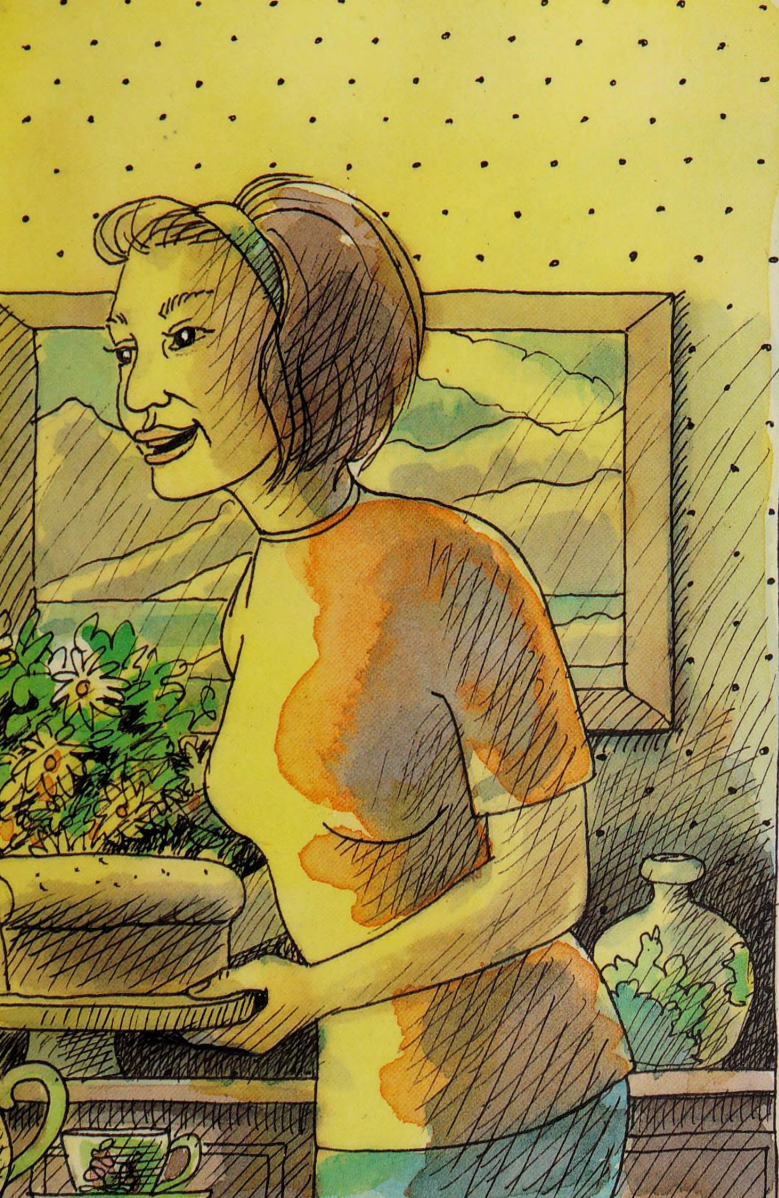
# LOCAL NEWS

CHAMPION SPARROWS  
AND CHILDREN

## RESCUE







Their mother shook her head.  
“I never know what you two  
are going to do next.”

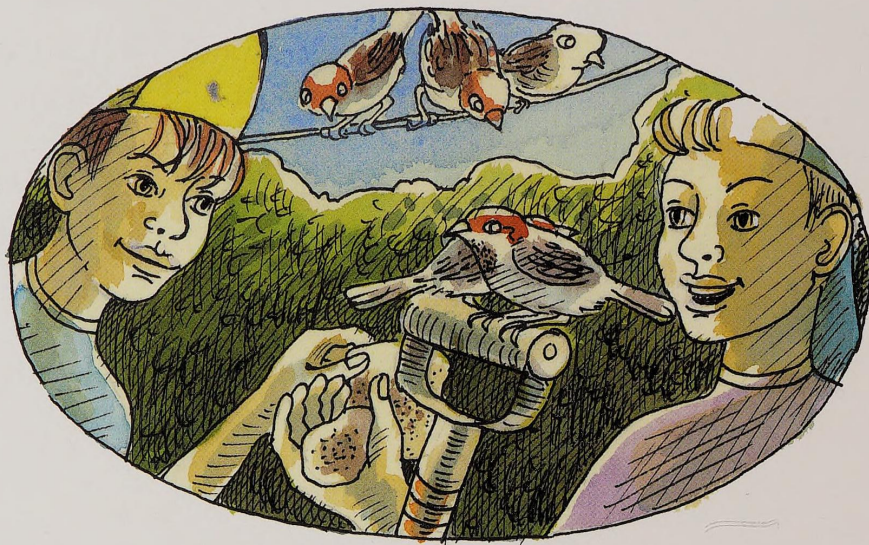
Their father showed them  
their photo in the newspaper  
with Mrs. McKenzie and the sparrow.

“She’s a very nice lady,” said George.

“And very smart,” said his father.

Above the photo were the words,  
THE CHAMPION OF  
SPARROWS AND CHILDREN.





That afternoon, George and Harry  
fed bread to the sparrows in the garden.  
They thought that their bird  
might have been there, too,  
but it was hard to tell, because now,  
every sparrow they saw  
had that special trusting look.











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**JOY COWLEY** is an award-winning author whose books are loved by children all over the world. Author of several adult novels and over 300 books for children, she is best known to young readers as the author of *Mrs. Wishy-Washy*. Other titles include *The Rusty, Trusty Tractor* and *Big Moon Tortilla*. Ms. Cowley lives with her husband in New Zealand.

**GAVIN BISHOP** is an art teacher, writer, and illustrator of children's books. His first book, *Mrs. McGinty and the Bizarre Plant*, won the New Zealand Children's Book of the Year award. Other titles include *The Lion and the Jackal* and *The Wedding of Mistress Fox*. He lives in New Zealand.

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